

# AMERICAN EMBASSY'S NATIONAL DAILY PRESS REVIEW

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## **Today's Top Stories**

1. Senegalese President accuses former Ivorian leader Laurent Gbagbo of arming dissident group
2. RTI official suspended after failing to report on a government-led exhibition soccer game.
3. Hundreds gather in Abidjan to protest electricity shortages

1. Senegalese President accuses former Ivorian leader Laurent Gbagbo of arming dissident groups

In a recent interview with French wire service RFI and reported in L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 5) Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade accused Ivorian former leader Laurent Gbagbo of having armed a dissident group in the disputed Casamance province. According to the Senegalese leader, Cote d'Ivoire's then-president financed Casamance rebel leader Salif Sadio who, he added, travelled to Cote d'Ivoire on many occasions. "Salif Sadio was supported by Laurent Gbagbo... he has stayed there and received money and ammunition to foster his movement," Mr. Wade reportedly said.

These allegations were, however, rejected by Gbagbo's former adviser Mr. Alain Toussaint, who qualified the statement as unfounded and irresponsible. "There is no tangible evidence of Gbagbo's link with Mr. Salif Sadio... These accusations are baseless," he reportedly said (p. 5), adding that the Senegalese leader has been fueling the Ivorian crisis since 2002.

This development came as Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 7) noted that former president Laurent Gbagbo is to face additional charges in Cote d'Ivoire despite his transfer to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Citing people close to the case, the paper underscored that besides charges of human rights violations and crimes against humanity, Mr. Gbagbo is accused of undermining state security and embezzlement. According to the daily, investigations are ongoing and a court in Abidjan is to decide on the case soon.

Le Quotidien (p. 5) on its part alleged that French President Nicolas Sarkozy is maneuvering for the release of the Ivorian former leader who is awaiting trial at the ICC. According to the daily the drive is being made in fear of the possible disclosure of sensitive information likely to bring to light the role France has played in Cote d'Ivoire's recent history. The daily went on suggesting that in the event of a trial, former president Laurent Gbagbo could release details of events surrounding the controversial

bombing in 2004 of a French military camp in Bouake that led to the destruction of Ivorian military aircraft by the French military.

In a separate story, Le Temps (p. 2) noted that Gbagbo's doctor, Ble Christophe was released from jail five days after a court had granted him bail. According to the daily, the information was confirmed yesterday by his lawyer Toussaint Zahui Dako.

## 2. RTI official suspended after failing to report on a government-led exhibition soccer game

An exhibition soccer game was held yesterday in Abidjan between members of the government and officials of Cote d'Ivoire's soccer league. The event was in the limelight of pro-government papers and of Fraternite Matin (pp. 18 & 19) which devoted large columns to the gala party. According to the daily, the initiative was in support of Cote d'Ivoire's soccer team which will compete for the 2012 African Cup of Nations co-organized by Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. The event was highlighted by President Ouattara's participation in the game, the paper said.

However, for unknown reasons, the event was not broadcast live on national television as initially planned. As a result, RTI management announced the suspension of the head of the broadcast branch, Mr. Doua Bruno. The announcement was made yesterday in the course of the RTI evening news bulletin.

The gala party was criticized by opposition papers, especially Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 3), which accused the government of playing while challenges to improve the day-to-day lives of Ivorians remain unattended.

## 3. Hundreds gather in Abidjan to protest electricity shortages

Hundreds of people, mostly women and tradesmen, gathered yesterday in Abidjan to protest recurring electricity shortages. According to Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 3), demonstrators occupied for hours the main road leading to neighboring Ghana before a compromise could finally be found with government officials and the national electricity company, CIE.

Note: L'Inter and Soir Info did not publish today as they observe a day of mourning following the death of their managing director Nady Rayess, who died in plane crash last Monday.

Opposition newspaper Aujourd'hui was not published today; it has been suspended by the Conseil National de la Presse, Cote d'Ivoire's print media regulator.